

ARTHOG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE ARTHOG VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 5th February 2020

992: The Chairman Opened the Meeting: The meeting opened at 7.05 pm. The Chairman welcomed all present, with a special welcome to Gareth Evens of the NRW and Mike Thrussell, Ambassador for Fairbourne.

993: Present: Cllr's Eves, Roberts, Thomas, Woolley, Haycock, Cllr's (Mrs) Woolley, (Mrs) Hughes, (Mrs) Stott, (Mrs) Darvill, (Mrs) Salt, Clerk Angela Thomas, Guests Gareth Evens and Mike Thrussell. Three members of the public from Arthog were also present.

994: Apologies Received: Cllr (Mrs) Neville, Sylvia Stephenson

995: Councillors' Declaration of Interest: Nil

996: Guest Speaker: Gareth Evens from the NRW. The Chairman, Clerk and Mike Thrussell had met with Gareth earlier on the beach, at low tide, to discuss various concerns. Gareth gave a summary of the points that had been discussed.

Point 1. Friog Corner. GE said that the NRW were satisfied with the work carried out by Jones Bros from the plans that were submitted by Royal Haskoning (Greg Guthrie). The NRW were confident that the work would fully protect Friog Corner for the foreseeable future. However, the NRW were concerned with the seepage under the sea wall into the Caravan Park, which had resulted in a Selwood pump being permanently on site. The plans had not considered the possibility of seepage under the sea wall. The pump had been used on several occasions and now the excess seepage was being pumped into the ditch running parallel with the road. An investigation is underway into whether there is any liability involved and an answer is being sought. A JCB type digger will be left on site for the duration of the upcoming storms to enable the dragging of shingle back up the bank to protect the sea wall.

Point 2. Discussion regarding the unusual scalloping on the beach took place and GE confirmed that at this moment in time there is no absolute answer as to what is causing the problems. Mike Thrussell, Ambassador asked whether the NRW had considered the works carried out in Tywyn and at the Dysynni and Tonfanau. This appeared to have influenced the tide run into Fairbourne, speeding it up, and possibly causing the scalloping. Cllr Eves said that if you look towards Barmouth you can also see the Barmouth Bar has moved. Mike Thrussell also said that the mussel beds were now covered in sand, which had not been the case prior to those works. Cllr Thomas said that the NRW needed to take a greater notice of local knowledge and GE acknowledged that. Cllr Thomas asked that the NRW minuted this point. One solution suggested was that shingle be moved from the North of the beach back to the south, however, the shingle to the North is in an SSI area and although it would make sense, licenses would have to be obtained to carry that work out. The License would have to be issued by the NRW to enable the NRW to carry out the work. A quicker method is to import shingle from a quarry; however, this is an expensive solution as opposed to just the cost of a digger.

Point 3. The engagement of an Engineer specifically to look at the problem in Fairbourne. Gareth Evens confirmed that the NRW have "bought in" a service, ie an Engineer specifically to look after and into Fairbourne and to form a management plan in place for the future. GE said that currently the NRW did not have an Engineer to bring together all the information regarding the works that had

been carried out to the South of Fairbourne and to look at the possible accumulative effects they had on the tidal run etc. into Fairbourne. Also, to bring together the work that Gwynedd Council had done and consolidate it with the NRW work. The NRW had not had a chance to challenge anything submitted by GC. GE confirmed that the NRW were aware of the works on the Dysynni and all the Farmers concerns that the Dysynni was not draining away properly. Policies had changed making work more difficult and funding is always an issue. Cllr Woolley asked the NRW to consider that every action has a consequence, and several consequences were affecting Fairbourne. Cllr (Mrs) Salt said that she was sure that the NRW were considerate, but the huge number of variables often make it very difficult. GE sighted the work carried out in Borth and the consequences of that work increasing the velocity of the tide.

Point 4. Footpath 13 Morfa Mawddach. GE had no knowledge of what the NRW proposed to do about re-instating the Footpath, he did however feel that the NRW might not make it a priority. The Clerk mentioned that she had in fact that evening received an email from Keith Ivens who said that a solution had not been found but that the situation was still ongoing. GE confirmed the reasons for the breach in the sea wall and that it was unlikely that the breach would be re-filled. The Community Councillors said that they realized that but reiterated that there had been little consultation with the Community prior to the breach being made and that it was done in a very hasty manner.

Point 5. The Ditches in Fairbourne were functioning much better than previously and this was down to the fact that they have been de-silted. GE confirmed that further work, towards the end of the year (September after the birds have fledged etc) will be carried out to further de-silt.

Gareth Evens said that Fairbourne keeps him awake at night, he acknowledged that for the residents it must be a constant source of anxiety and an unknown future.

997: To Receive Any Special Announcements: No announcements

998: To Confirm Minutes of the meeting held on January 8th 2020: The minutes were confirmed as correct and Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Woolley.

999: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on January 8th, 2020: No matters raised. However, Cllr (Mrs) Salt said that she had followed up on the reference that Huw Williams had made to Pembrokeshire National Park making plots available to residents to rebuild upon. It was however, not as reported. Residents had to be prepared to pay for the demolition of their property they would then be eligible to purchase a plot of land at a preferential price with planning permission in place. There were no plans in Pembrokeshire to make land available as compensation.

1000: Clerks Report: The Clerk reported that she had received an email reply from Keith Ivens regarding footpath 13, however, the NRW had not concluded as to what they were going to do about it. Keith Ivens said he would let the ACC know as soon as a decision had been made. Cllr Eves said that he thought it would be unlikely that a solution would be found due to the constraints the NRW are under. The Clerk reported on a further request for media to visit the Village. The reply would be as usual, if the reporting is faithful then the Village has no problem. A press release from the Wales Audit Office highlighted that 38 Community Councils had not submitted their accounts for Audit. The Clerk had written to Lowri Norrington-Davies reference the re-submission of the bid made on behalf of the Fairbourne Interest Company. This had been mentioned during a meeting held in Aberystwyth with James Morris, Gwynedd Council and Arthog Community Council. James Morris had asked Lisa Goodier why she had not re-submitted the bid, to which there was no reply. The Clerk asked Lowri whether she had any knowledge as to whether the bid had been re-submitted.

The answer was it had not. Lowri said that the ACC needed to take the matter up with Gwynedd Council. A reply came from Huw Williams who said that the bid should now be submitted by the Project Board. The Chairman said that Lisa Goodier's role as intermediary was now under review. Funding had been withdrawn for Lisa Goodier to attend Fairbourne any longer. The Clerk had received paperwork regarding the Dyfi Bridge Project. A Notice of the Environmental Statement, the Fishguard to Bangor trunk road (A487 Dyfi Bridge). A reply had been received about the Fairbourne Learning Project request for information. Unfortunately, it did not really make any clearer who had been involved from the Village, mainly due to data privacy concerns. The matter is now closed. The Clerk confirmed that she had written (10th January) to the Reverend Tim Webb regarding the closure of St Catherine's Church in Arthog. A reply had not been received to-date. It was decided to allow a little more time and then send a follow up letter. The event held in the Village Hall by a person called Mark Windows. Basically a conspiracy theorist and possible climate change denier the events went ahead without too much incident. Originally the organisers were charging £10/£12 to attend this however was dropped. Cllr Eves and Mike Thrussell attending on behalf of the Village to assess exactly what angle the organisers were coming from. It did not appear to be a great success and attendance was quite poor. The Clerk had received a reply from Jonathan Chapman, Principal Engineer YGC reference the Wesleyan Chapel and the Pont Arthog Parapet. Neither were deemed to be a risk to the public. Funds will be made available in the new financial year to repair the bridge in Arthog. A letter of thanks had been received from Mabon ap Gwynfor for supporting his bid to establish a rapid diagnostic Centre for prospective cancer patients in Gwynedd. It has been tabled. A letter was passed to Cllr (Mrs) Hughes reference red telephone boxes. There is a limited time to appeal against removal. Cllr Hughes said she would action the letter. A consultation paper on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill had been received and would be kept on file. A report on SUDS was passed to Cllr Thomas for review. A request for a commemorative bench from the Richards family was still trying to be resolved. It was thought that one of the existing benches could be removed and the Richards family bench put in its place. Cllr Roberts will check out the feasibility of this and report back.

1001: Special Items Brought to Attention: Cllr Eves reported on the formation of the new Project Board, which he attended together with the two Ambassadors for Fairbourne, Sylvia Stephenson and Mike Thrussell. Cllr Eves was voted on as Chairman of the new Board. He said that if after 12 months nothing had been achieved or furthered then he would resign. Both the Ambassadors agreed that they would in fact do the same. After 6 years of running the existing Project Board with no results it is hoped that this new board will perhaps get some action. The first meeting settled the dust the second meeting will be to appoint the line leaders. Mike Thrussell pointed out that this is all dependent upon funds being available. Cllr (Mrs) Hughes said (call me cynical) that after 6 years of achieving nothing, she felt that this was just an exercise on behalf of GC to be able to say, "see, we are doing something". Mike Thrussell said that he also thought it was an opportunity for certain people to "pass the buck". Cllr Eves said that he would be attending a Wales Flooding Meeting on the 9th June, venue and time to be confirmed. He said that he had also been asked to speak at the Welsh Labour Party Meeting. Cllr Woolley said that he thought all the questions that were asked were being pushed back and back. Concerns were once again raised about the monitor placed on Barmouth bridge, whether it was working properly and whether the data it was producing was being interpreted correctly. Also, an in-depth discussion took place regarding the silt in the estuary and within the Fairbourne ditch system. There was no resolution. The minutes produced by GC for the first Board Meeting had been sent to the Clerk. Huw Williams asked that Cllr Eves approved the minutes and that the Clerk send them to all attended and apologies. Cllr Eves approved the minutes.

A proposer and seconder were requested to formally induct Sylvia Stephenson and Mike Thrussell as affiliates to the Arthog Community Council. It was proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Woolley.

1002: To deal with Any Correspondence: A request had been received from Fairbourne and Friog Village Hall, complete with current accounts. The Clerk will write to Malcolm Flynn saying that this will be reviewed at the March meeting in line with Arthog Village Halls request for support.

1003: To Deal with Planning Matters: No planning matters

1004: Financial Statement and Report: The monthly analysis sheet had been sent to all. The Clerk said that there were three cheques still to be presented at the bank. No cheques had been presented in the month of January. One cheque was presented for signature to the value of £16.40 for postage.

There were no queries. In the March meeting support for Arthog Village Hall, Friog and Fairbourne Village Hall and the invoice for the ACC Website will be discussed. An estimate for work to be carried out in the Cemetery was passed to the Clerk. The work will take place in April and August and involves the spraying of weeds. There were no queries.

1005: To Receive Councillors' Questions: Speed limits through Arthog. Cllr Louise Hughes said that she had been trying to sort out the speed limits through Arthog for some time. The recent change was as a result of the speed being out of the law, this dated back to road repairs in 2012 and they had never been put back to within the law. A recent accident resulted in 3 cars being damaged/written off. The three members of the public were present at the meeting thinking it was an open meeting to discuss the present speed situation in Arthog. Cllr (Mrs) Hughes will carry this forward to County Council and continue to lobby to have the speed reduced to 30mph from the Toll House right the way through to Arthog Hill. Cllr (Mrs) Salt asked of the Clerk had had any success in finding out about the 2/3 dubious people in the village who it was reported were trying to rob houses. The answer was not at this moment in time. Cllr Eves at this point reported that the miniature railway had suffered theft of 20 of their brand-new wooden sleepers.

1006: Representatives Report: Cllr (Mrs) Stott reported that the pedestrian path on the bridge would be closed at half term for repair work to take place. Cllr (Mrs) Neville will report on the playpark at the next meeting. Cllr Eves reported that the Golf Club will be taken over in the next few days. New Directors will be appointed. Fairbourne Amenities Trust had not held a meeting so nothing to report. Cllr Thomas had acquired a quote for the spraying of the paths in the cemetery and war memorial, £50.00 total. Work would be carried out in April and August. Proposed by Cllr Roberts and seconded by Cllr Haycock. The Clerk reported that there was a piece of slate sticking out of the wall at the War Memorial. Cllr Roberts said he would deal with it. Cllr Thomas reported that work was to be carried out on the wall up the A493 leading to Llywngwriol. Cllr (Mrs) Hughes said that in fact that had all come to a stop. It was going to be re-inspected again. It was suggested that the Clerk wrote to Network Rail and Gwynedd Council Highways, to find out what was happening and whether a repair was to be made. It was in a dangerous state.

1007: Date and Time of Next Meeting: Wednesday March 4th in Fairbourne Village Hall.

GE – Gareth Evens

GC – Gwynedd Council

NRW – Natural Resources Wales